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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 16 June 1993, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION (continued)

(b) MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES (continued) (DP/1993/21)

1. The PRESIDENT read out the text of a decision which the Council had considered at its previous meeting as follows: "The Council takes note of document DP/1993/21, as well as the comments made thereon at the fortieth session. The Administrator will continue consultations on this subject with the Governing Council, including at the special session of the Council in 1994, with a view to submitting a conceptual paper on issues relating to the sixth programming cycle to the Council at its forty-first regular session." He took it that the Council agreed to that decision.

2. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

(b) PROPOSAL CONCERNING LOCATION OF UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND UNITER NATIONS POPULATION FUND HEADQUARTERS (continued) (DP/1993/L.11)

3. The PRESIDENT drew attention to draft decision DP/1993/L.11, and said that he took it that the Council wished to adopt it.

4. It was so decided.

STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

5. Mr. ELIASSON (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs) said that, although there were fervent hopes that the United Nations would become an effective instrument for the attainment of peace, development and a dignified life for all, there was also a widespread fear that the world would lack the resources and political will to grapple with the great issues of survival. The United Nations had shifted its focus away from the resolution of international conflicts and towards involvement in complex emergencies caused by strife within nations. While the number of people needing assistance had reached staggering levels, the Organization had an obligation to uphold the principles of universality, neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian assistance, often under extremely difficult security conditions and political circumstances.

6. During the past year the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) had been called upon repeatedly to coordinate the response of the United Nations to crises of a complexity and scale undreamed of at the time of the adoption of resolution 46/182. Unfortunately, efforts to achieve security and to bring about economic and social reforms had been undermined by widespread structural problems. Population growth, massive migrations, poverty, and environmental degradation would have to be tackled if the United Nations was to move beyond a merely ad hoc approach to emergencies. More stress would have to be placed on grappling with root causes and strategies for prevention.

(Mr. Eliasson)

7. The experience of the past year had highlighted the complex relationship between relief, rehabilitation and development. Infrastructure rehabilitation must begin during the emergency phase and involve the participation of development institutions to ensure a smooth and rapid transition to development. The growing rapport among the World Bank, UNDP, DHA and other programmes and agencies in the humanitarian and rehabilitation field were a step in that direction.

8. The role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator had become crucial to the country-level coordination of emergency relief operations. The Resident Coordinator and the in-country disaster management team coordinated United Nations field-level activities to ease the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development. The DHA-UNDP relationship was a key element in coordinating country-level responses to emergencies. DHA and UNDP had worked together closely to develop common approaches both to policy questions and to operational modalities. The recommendations produced at a recent workshop for Resident Coordinators and senior UNDP and DHA staff were in the process of being implemented. The UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme, currently in its third year of on-the-ground training, had become a principal mechanism for promoting disaster preparedness and disaster mitigation, and had proven to be an effective tool for promoting country-level cooperation among the operational agencies of the United Nations system. DHA and UNDP were committed to close cooperation to ensure strong and effective field-level representation.

9. In sum, UNDP could make a valuable contribution in three areas. First, UNDP could play a key role at the field level in supporting the efforts of Governments to build their capacity in disaster mitigation and disaster management. Second, UNDP could provide administrative and financial support to Resident Coordinators in the aftermath of a disaster or complex emergency. In cases where the Secretary-General established a special mechanism for the in-country coordination of relief activities, UNDP headquarters and field office support was vital; where no such special structure was installed, it was indispensable. Third, UNDP could participate in the shift from rehabilitation to sustainable development, which would require both close cooperation between in-country development and emergency agencies, and a dialogue with donors on ways of achieving optimal use of their emergency and development funds. The uprooting of populations was a growing problem which would increase the need for development-based reintegration programmes; failure to address that issue would almost certainly imperil fragile peace accords.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1992 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (continued)

(b) THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN COMBATING HIV/AIDS (DP/1993/12)

10. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that UNDP had been actively involved in raising awareness about the development implications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, supporting and strengthening the capacity of communities to respond to it, promoting and aiding programmes, especially those which took into account the susceptibility of women to infection, assisting Governments in the development

(Mr. Edgren)

of multidimensional HIV strategies, and facilitating a collaborative and coordinated response within the United Nations system.

11. The HIV and Development Programme, which was responsible for coordinating the global, interregional, regional, national and community programme initiatives of UNDP concerning the HIV/AIDS epidemic, had organized country and inter-country workshops in over 20 countries in all regions and developed position papers, training materials and other documentation on pandemic-related policy and programme issues. UNDP was working to strengthen national and regional capacity, to provide support for the development of multisectoral programming, training, study tours and new approaches to community-based monitoring and evaluation, and to mobilize other key actors in the United Nations system. It had allocated Technical Services Support at the programme level (TSS-1) funds for an analysis, by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), of the impact of the pandemic on agriculture and the labour force in four African countries, and was collaborating with international financing institutions as well as with the African and Asian Development Banks through joint programme development, training and information sharing.

12. He drew the Council's attention to the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/12) on the human immunodeficiency virus, the acquired immune deficiency syndrome and development which highlighted the recommendations of the UNDP Central Evaluation Office (CEO), and to the proposals for strengthening UNDP capacity to respond to the pandemic contained in paragraphs 222-226 of document DP/1993/45. He informed the Council that at the most recent World Health Assembly, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) had been requested to undertake, in close cooperation with, inter alia, the Administrator of UNDP, a study to consider the economic and organizational benefits, to Member States and the United Nations system, of a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV and AIDS. That action reflected the dynamic nature of the pandemic as well as the growing understanding that health and sustainable human development were inextricably linked; it also acknowledged the need to look beyond sectoral programming to multidimensional programmatic responses. In the preceding three years, four external evaluations on the coordination of responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic had been requested by various intergovernmental forums; coordination had also been the subject of debate in the Economic and Social Council in 1992. All those efforts represented time and labour not spent in dealing with the epidemic itself.

13. Concern had been expressed that rivalry or antagonism could arise between WHO and UNDP, owing to the possible overlap or duplication of activities. For its part, UNDP had consistently sought to work in a complementary and collaborative manner with WHO, and to support the leadership of WHO in health policy formulation. The Memorandum of Understanding for the Implementation of the WHO/UNDP Alliance to Combat HIV/AIDS, signed in 1992, had recognized UNDP's role in the development of multisectoral programmatic approaches to the epidemic and in the associated administrative, legal and policy frameworks. As the report indicated, collaboration between WHO and UNDP was strengthening. Since national Governments were increasingly turning to UNDP to assist them in responding to the social and economic aspects of the epidemic, UNDP was working to strengthen the field offices, and had created a new set of field posts for

development professionals rather than health specialists, which would make WHO and UNDP assistance truly complementary and synergistic.

14. While UNDP had to date made available over $40 million at country and inter-country levels in support of programmes, it was estimated that an additional $100 million would have been allocated for HIV and Development Programme activities by the end of the current cycle. He strongly urged the Budgetary and Finance Committee to approve the proposal to allocate more funds for the field offices, to enable them to carry out effectively HIV and Development advocacy, programme development, monitoring, evaluation and coordination functions. Despite its small team size, and many financial constraints, the HIV and Development Programme had succeeded, within a relatively short period of time, in facilitating a coordinated approach to the pandemic, mobilizing UNDP headquarters and field offices, reaching out to NGOs, Governments, and community groups around the world, and making an extraordinary contribution towards the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

15. Mr. MERSON (Director, Global Programme on AIDS, World Health Organization) said that prevention and treatment of AIDS required a thorough understanding of the implications the disease had for development and effective implementation of strategies for its control. UNDP had a crucial role to play in that area.

16. The AIDS pandemic had become truly global. As of mid-1993, approximately 14 million adults and children world wide had been infected with HIV and over 2 million had developed AIDS. While sub-Saharan Africa had the largest number of infections, the biggest increase in 1992 had been in Latin America and South and South-East Asia. World wide, about 75 per cent of HIV infections had been acquired through sexual intercourse. Heterosexual transmission was on the rise. Moreover, the vulnerability of youth was becoming clear. It was also recognized that the transmission of other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) was associated with the same behaviours that exposed individuals to HIV infection and greatly facilitated the transmission of HIV. Effective STD diagnosis, care and prevention were therefore imperative for the prevention of HIV infection.

17. HIV infection led to a host of other diseases, one of the most serious being tuberculosis, which was already one of the leading causes of adult death in many developing countries. An alarming increase in cases had been reported in many countries. The increasing numbers of people with tuberculosis and other opportunistic infections were placing overwhelming stress on already fragile health systems. The cost to individual families was even more devastating; when parents died, their children and elderly dependants were often deeply impoverished because of the costs in time and money of caring for someone with AIDS.

18. Epidemiologically, there were two key challenges. In those countries where HIV had arrived early in the pandemic, there was a need to provide care and support to persons with AIDS and to deal with the social and economic consequences of their illness, while accelerating prevention efforts. In countries where HIV was new, there was the challenge of preventing the type of serious epidemic seen elsewhere.

(Mr. Merson)

19. The WHO Global Programme on AIDS (WHO/GPA) continued to be involved in a wide range of activities. It was providing policy and technical guidance to Governments in developing and coordinating broad-based national responses to HIV and AIDS, and was collaborating with 153 countries and areas. That cooperation concentrated on assistance in the formulation of multisectoral medium-term plans and improvements in the planning and management skills of national staff, as well as technical support.

20. WHO was continuing its efforts to learn more about prevention activities, particularly those related to prevention of sexual transmission. The goal was to help countries select an appropriate mix of interventions and approaches that had the most impact, taking into account cost, feasibility, replicability and sustainability. Special emphasis was being given to interventions targeted at youth and women, as well as to the social, political and economic factors that facilitated or constrained behaviour change among individuals, families and communities. Many of WHO's efforts were in support of prevention and care activities carried out by non-governmental organizations. It worked directly with NGOs, especially national and regional networks set up to strengthen NGO involvement.

21. WHO's research efforts continue to expand. One of its highest priorities was support of social and behavioural research. Priority was being given to studies of contextual factors affecting sexual behaviour, particularly among young people; research to gain a better understanding of household and community responses to HIV and AIDS; and research on gender relations in the area of sexual negotiation. A new area being explored was the determinants of HIV and AIDS-related discrimination, stigmatization and denial. The studies should provide insights into how human behaviour contributed to the spread of the pandemic, and how that behaviour could be modified.

22. WHO was continuing its support of biomedical research, including the development of an HIV vaccine that was appropriate for use in developing countries and the development of barrier methods under the control of women, since it had been found that women could not control or even negotiate safer sex in many settings. Although much progress had been made in research efforts it must be accepted that scientific advances would come in small steps.

23. WHO continued to give high priority to efforts to prevent discrimination against HIV-infected persons, which continued to undermine public health efforts. It had taken steps to enlist the high-level political support for AIDS prevention and control. Political leaders from developed and developing countries and business leaders in the private sector must give AIDS prevention the priority it deserved.

24. World Health Assembly resolution WHA 46.37 had called for a joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS. That request was a clear recognition that the struggle against AIDS could not be divided among organizations or sectors; the United Nations system must develop a comprehensive, well-managed response to HIV/AIDS. The process outlined in the resolution was already under way. The Director-General of WHO had contacted the executive heads of UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNFPA, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and

(Mr. Merson)

the World Bank, requesting their collaboration; a first meeting had been held in May 1993 and a second meeting would be held during the current week. New initiatives and resources, or the expansion of ongoing activities, would derive the greatest benefit if undertaken in the context of the study's recommendations. The study would offer an opportunity to move forward within the context of the global strategy for the prevention and control of AIDS, endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 47/40.

25. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that it was important to establish a mechanism to coordinate the activities of UNDP with those of WHO. His delegation believed that UNDP had a significant role to play, but was concerned about the possibility of rivalries developing among the relevant United Nations agencies. Such rivalries reduced the effectiveness of assistance and harmed recipient countries. Every effort should be made to avoid costly duplication of work.

26. His delegation was not opposed to the establishment of the 22 new Professional posts at the field level; however, since it was not clear what function they would serve, the decision on whether to release the necessary resources should be made only after the terms of reference for the posts were made available.

27. Ms. NOTEBOOM (Netherlands) said that the report of the UNDP Central Evaluation Office (DP/1993/12) contained a great deal of self-criticism regarding UNDP's performance at the country level; that was the bet starting-point for considering anew the role and functions of UNDP in the fight against HIV/AIDS. One of its most worrying findings was that the United Nations system was not in a position to provide the leadership and support the developing countries needed and that sometimes there was no sense of common purpose between the different agencies. She urged UNDP to make active efforts to improve that situation. It was imperative to enhance multilateral cooperation, coordination and complementarity. World Health Assembly resolution WHA 46.37 underscored the need for a truly multisectoral and multi-agency approach. UNDP must participate fully in that important system-wide study.

28. At the country level, UNDP should continue to contribute to the multisectoral response needed to strengthen efforts to stop the spread of the pandemic and reduce its social and economic consequences. Its role would be to continue to strengthen national capacities to plan and manage technical cooperation in the area of HIV/AIDS and development and to ensure the coherence of technical inputs in national strategies and programmes and the optimal use of national as well as external expertise and financial resources.

29. Her delegation agreed with the rationale behind the proposal to establish 22 national officer posts devoted to the fight against AIDS. However, it would be willing to approve the 22 posts only if the UNDP/WHO Alliance explicitly approved their establishment. It would also appreciate more information on the geographical distribution of the posts.

30. Mr. BABA (Observer for Uganda) said that despite all the efforts made to combat AIDS, the HIV/AIDS pandemic had become a matter of desperation to all the countries affected. Mass media campaigns and community-based programmes had succeeded in bringing about some behaviour change. In sub-Saharan Africa,

(Mr. Baba, Observer, Uganda)

national policies had been developed that supported the community response, focusing on preventive measures and prevention through education. Increased priority must now be given to the need for better care facilities and psychological support for HIV-infected people, drugs for the treatment of opportunistic infections including STDs, and further scientific research and biomedical and socio-behavioural studies.

31. Knowledge of how HIV was transmitted was of little help if women were not empowered to support themselves, or if the cost of treatment for STDs was unaffordable. It was therefore important to improve the social and economic status of women and other vulnerable groups. In sub-Saharan Africa, women were bearing the burden of care, of increasing infection rates and of the growing prenatal transmission. Women had the greatest potential for bringing the pandemic under control, if they were empowered to do so; the strategy for men should basically involve behaviour change.

32. AIDS should be addressed not only as a health issue but also as a development issue, in the context of specific policy priorities relating to poverty, the position of women and children, education and improvement of the health care system. That multisectoral approach to the AIDS pandemic must be maintained. Both WHO and UNDP should continue to develop the capacity to work intersectorally in their respective roles. Health must be integrated with the social, human rights and economic consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the need for a coordinated response. His delegation therefore supported the proposal to establish national field officers to strengthen the resident coordination system.

33. Given the incredible shortage of resources, there was a need for greater efficiency in their use. Coordination at the country level was of critical importance; duplication of programmes must be avoided. There must be mutual respect among professionals in the field and exchanges of experience about the effectiveness and sustainability of the projects being undertaken. At the same time, public support must be maintained for programmes at the field level, and the capacity of communities and of Governments to respond to the epidemic must be developed and strengthened.

34. Mr. STOGREN (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the AIDS pandemic was threatening economic and social development in an increasing number of countries, particularly in the developing world. It was widely acknowledged that a multisectoral response was needed from a wide range of international organizations in order to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS and alleviate its consequences. The United Nations system had an important role to play in ensuring an integrated and coherent response and, in that connection, he welcomed the increased attention given to HIV/AIDS in the fifth cycle country programmes.

35. While the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/12) recognized the seriousness of the pandemic and the need for multisectoral strategies, it gave the misleading impression that UNDP was the leading organization in the efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, which would do little to help improve coordination within the United Nations system and with other organizations. The task of the international organizations should be to help recipient countries develop and

(Mr. Stogren, Sweden)

implement national strategies and programmes, a process in which GPA had a key role to play, and to strengthen national capacity within the framework of a common United Nations programme formulated as part of the country strategy note, in line with the objectives of General Assembly resolution 47/199. The primary task of UNDP was to plan and facilitate measures in the economic and social areas and integrate them into the country programmes, in cooperation with other agencies and through its field office network and resident coordinators.

36. Lack of coordination and even competition between some United Nations organizations had been a concern in recent years and the Nordic countries welcomed the decision of the World Health Assembly to undertake a study on a joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS. Another important step towards improving coordination was the recent establishment of the GPA Management Committee Task Force on HIV/AIDS Coordination, which was intended to serve as a focal point for coordination and to seek agreement on priority areas of work among different agencies.

37. In the budget estimates for the biennium 1994-1995, the Administrator was proposing to create 22 national officer posts as local staff support for the resident coordinators for HIV/AIDS programmes. The Nordic countries proposed that, before the posts were established, UNDP should hold close consultations with the GPA Task Force on HIV/AIDS Coordination in order to clarify the specific role of UNDP at country level, discuss how available resources could be used in the most effective way and specify job descriptions for the posts.

38. While there was no one leading organization in the international struggle to combat AIDS, WHO and UNDP were key actors and should work together to mobilize the entire United Nations system. Further cooperation was also needed with the World Bank and regional banks in order to obtain the urgently needed resources.

39. Mr. BLANK (Germany) said that, given the complexity of the issue and the number of different United Nations organizations involved, it was vital to avoid rivalry and the creation of parallel structures. Full support should therefore be given to the work of the GPA Task Force. For its part, UNDP had a unique role to play in helping Governments to build national policy-making capacity to identify, analyse and plan for the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. World Health Assembly resolution WHA 46.37, which requested its Director-General to study the feasibility of establishing a joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS, also deserved support and his delegation called on the Administrator to cooperate fully in the consultations to be held on that question.

40. Ms. KNUTSON (Canada) said that her delegation was concerned to hear that United Nations programming at country level lacked direction and was often ineffective, uncoordinated and invisible. It therefore urged UNDP to participate fully in the discussions on the establishment of a co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS. The aim should be to concentrate human and financial resources on halting the rapid spread of the pandemic, which was a crucial health problem with major implications for development policy in many countries.

(Ms. Knutson, Canada)

41. The 22 proposed national officer posts should not be established until close consultations had been held with the GPA Task Force to agree on an appropriate division of responsibility for the posts. While any delays which might ensue were regrettable, it was vital to ensure a collective United Nations approach.

42. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that the HIV/AIDS pandemic had implications which cut across traditional programme and development sectors and it was clear that UNDP had a crucial role to play in improving coordination. However, its primary responsibility was to build national policy-making capacity to identify, analyse and plan for the socio-economic impact and development implications of the pandemic. She did not agree that all agencies needed to be involved at all the different intervention points, whether medical, economic, social or human. What was needed was a balance which emphasized comparative advantages and responsibilities within established mandates, if best use was to be made of the limited resources.

43. According to the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/12), UNDP now had a significant body of knowledge about effective approaches to the epidemic, but did not have adequate capacity to assist countries and organizations to respond, a fact which raised serious questions about the effectiveness of its activities. As reaffirmed in Governing Council decision 92/14, the partnership between UNDP and WHO was crucial in combating the pandemic and should be pursued within the framework of the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of AIDS. The WHO/UNDP Memorandum of Understanding was an excellent starting-point for improving management and coordination of HIV/AIDS resources and a mutually supportive relationship between the two agencies was vital. It was also important to understand the role of the resident coordinators in combating the epidemic and, in connection with the proposal to establish 22 national officer posts in the field, it would be useful to conduct a joint UNDP/WHO review of the functions to be performed by those officers and to take account of the study soon to be undertaken on the feasibility of establishing a joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

44. Mr. ZOLLER (United Kingdom) said that the approach taken by UNDP seemed designed to bring about social change so as to enable societies to understand and live with HIV/AIDS, through greater emphasis on community decision-making. He wondered whether countries which had adopted that approach found the epidemic easier to overcome, as suggested by paragraph 13 of the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/12).

45. The societal approach should be complemented by the provision of technical information; naturally such information was useful only if parallel initiatives were taken to mobilize and empower communities. A sectoral approach could be useful in channelling public funds cost-effectively, although compartmentalization should be avoided. The aim was to enhance the ability of societies to live with HIV/AIDS and it was necessary to determine how different agencies with different mandates could work together effectively to achieve that goal. His delegation believed that both societal and sectoral approaches were essential in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and was disturbed by the report's implication that the societal approach was inherently superior.

(Mr. Zoller, United Kingdom)

46. The apparent differences between the approaches adopted by UNDP and WHO in recent years were perplexing and raised a number of questions. According to paragraph 23 of the report, for example, radical changes were required in the orientation of national HIV/AIDS programmes. He wondered what changes UNDP had in mind and whether it thought that the investment in the WHO Global Programme on AIDS had been ineffective. In paragraph 25, it was claimed that sectoral measures had so far failed to slow the epidemic, yet there was no evidence to support that conclusion or to show that the societal approach advocated by UNDP would produce better results. He wondered whether the dialogue with field offices concerning the problem of transforming national capacity into project and programme documents referred to in paragraph 27 had led to changes in programming and whether improved results had been achieved. He would also welcome further information concerning the significant body of knowledge about the epidemic referred to in paragraph 30, especially as to how it had been disseminated. The call for further programme support contained in paragraph 37 raised a number of questions, such as the advisability of moving scarce resources away from other development work in the field of prevention and how that approach would promote harmony between United Nations agencies and other donors.

47. His delegation appreciated the sensitive analysis of coordination issues in section VI of the report, since the critical need was not merely to agree on structures and modalities for better coordination but rather to build on the strengths of different approaches. UNDP should work with other agencies at local, country and international levels to accommodate a mix of approaches.

48. His delegation hesitated to turn down the proposal for the establishment of 22 national officer posts, but felt that careful consideration should be given to their role in the light of the remarks made above. Perhaps the proposal could be approved on a provisional basis, until the Council was fully satisfied as to the exact nature of their functions.

49. Mr. COGHLAN (Observer for Australia) said that, while the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/12) identified some of the critical elements in developing effective responses to HIV/AIDS, it failed to take adequate account of the situation of countries in which the epidemic had only recently emerged. The report noted the lack of guidance from headquarters on how best to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic in UNDP programming but failed to provide sufficient information on the changes needed. Simply increasing staff might exacerbate problems or lead to duplication of WHO functions and, in any case, was hardly a viable solution at a time of financial constraint.

50. There seemed to be tension between UNDP and WHO over the leadership issue. Continued consultation and negotiation should therefore be encouraged in order to clarify their roles with regard to in-country HIV/AIDS programming. In addition, his delegation would like to know what specific operational measures had been taken to ensure coordination and complementarity of roles between WHO and UNDP since the signing of the WHO/UNDP Memorandum of Understanding in July 1992. Furthermore, given that staff increases in the field were unlikely, it wished to know what operational policies and procedures UNDP would introduce to ensure clarity and direction from headquarters to field-based personnel.

(Mr. Coghlan, Observer, Australia)

51. Finally, he reiterated his delegation's commitment to the implementation of World Health Assembly resolution WHA 46.37 concerning a study on a joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and urged UNDP to cooperate with the study.

52. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), replying to a question raised by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that UNDP had no intention of usurping the leadership role and wished to cooperate closely with WHO and all other United Nations agencies. He was unable to reply to the detailed questions raised by the representative of the United Kingdom in the limited time available, but wished to point out that UNDP did not consider that the sectoral approach had failed and fully agreed that both a societal and sectoral approach were needed.

53. In reply to the representative of Australia, he said that a number of steps were being taken to implement the WHO/UNDP Memorandum of Understanding, including assistance with training for resident coordinators and the proposed establishment of 22 national officer posts. He urged the Governing Council to give favourable consideration to that proposal. He fully agreed that consultations should be held with the GPA Task Force to ensure that the tasks of the officers were properly defined. Finally, he fully endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Uganda concerning the importance of women in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 17 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

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Other matters (continued)

(d) United Nations system regular and extrabudgetary technical cooperation expenditures

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OTHER MATTERS (continued)

(d) UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM REGULAR AND EXTRABUDGETARY TECHNICAL COOPERATION EXPENDITURES (DP/1993/57 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and DP/1993/58 and Add.1)

1. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), introducing the reports of the Administrator (DP/1993/57 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and DP/1993/58 and Add.1), said that both reports focused on growth and trends in expenditures and contributions. All components of non-UNDP-financed technical cooperation expenditures had declined between 1991 and 1992; for instance, expenditures from the regular budgets of agencies had fallen by 29 per cent, from $340 million in 1991 to $242 million in 1992, while the expenditures of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had shrunk by 25 per cent, from $172 million in 1991 to $128 million in 1992. In 1992, total contributions received to finance the extrabudgetary expenditures of the traditional agencies had declined by 6 per cent in comparison with 1991, which meant that contributions and expenditures had fallen simultaneously for the first time since 1985.

2. Operational assistance delivered during 1992 by UNFPA, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank/International Development Association (IDA) had grown by about 4 per cent over the previous year. Among other things, UNICEF expenditures in 1992 had grown by 27 per cent over the previous year's while assistance by WFP had grown by 18 per cent during the same period. However, technical cooperation as a percentage of total operational assistance had continued to decline.

3. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the reports were very useful. He encouraged the secretariat to continue its labour-intensive work, which was of great service to the bilateral agencies and to the United Nations system as a whole.

4. Ms. KNUTSON (Canada) said that the reports of the Administrator now before the Council were a reminder of the larger United Nations technical cooperation context in which UNDP operated. They served a useful purpose in that they showed that the World Bank/IDA group and the United Nations specialized agencies were major players in the field of technical cooperation, outspending UNDP. Of course, her delegation noticed that the share of resources going to UNDP and the specialized agencies vis-à-vis the World Bank/IDA, WFP and UNICEF was declining in relative and absolute terms, as indicated in the reports. However, since her delegation had only just received document DP/1993/58 and Add.1 it had not yet studied the future implications of that trend.

5. Not only did a significant portion of the UNDP budget go to the specialized agencies but those agencies also received substantial resources from a variety of other sources. In some cases the extrabudgetary resources exceeded the regular budget funding of those agencies. She wondered what effect that volume of extrabudgetary funds had on the priorities and daily management of each of the United Nations specialized agencies concerned, and whether the agencies were

(Ms. Knutson, Canada)

in the best position to implement and administer development activities called for by such large amounts of extrabudgetary funds. She also wondered who exercised the governing or oversight functions in respect of the implementation of those extrabudgetary activities.

6. Some people, had suggested that for the volume of extrabudgetary funds increasingly directed to United Nations specialized agencies, the governance system was so extended and diffuse that supervision, programming coordination and accountability must be questioned. Direct responsibility tended to fall into a "no man's land" between separate Governing Councils.

7. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that document DP/1993/58 and Add.1 had been issued late because of time constraints. It would be useful for comparisons between the 1991 and 1992 figures since there had been major changes. The final version would be issued later. The question of governance - particularly the fact that a large portion of the budgets of specialized agencies was managed and governed outside their normal governance set-up - had been dealt with in some depth in the context of the Nordic project.

8. The PRESIDENT said that he took it that the Council wished to take note of the reports submitted.

9. It was so decided.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (DP/1993/52; DP/1993/L.9)

10. Mr. AMBATCHEW (Director, Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC)), introducing the report of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries on its eighth session (DP/1993/L.9), said that the relevant decisions had been adopted on the basis of consensus. The High-level Committee had reviewed the report of the Administrator on the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which had been prepared in compliance with guidelines resulting from the Committee's seventh session and new questionnaires introduced for the 1991-1992 report. The report had confirmed that significant progress had been achieved both in the promotion and the use of TCDC.

11. At its eighth session the High-level Committee had also considered a paper setting out a strategy for the 1990s which identified specific objectives to be pursued during the decade and the main elements to be taken into account for the promotion and application of TCDC by Governments and United Nations organizations on a priority basis. The paper reflected very wide agreement on the main elements that could be considered in shaping policies and approaches to be pursued in the light of the needs and the context of particular regions and countries.

12. Introducing the report of the Administrator (DP/1992/52), he said that the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had endorsed the guidelines for the coordination and review of policies and procedures in the organizations of

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the United Nations development system concerning TCDC. The guidelines had then been approved by the High-level Committee at its eighth session, in decision 8/1 (DP/1993/L.9, annex I), in which the High-level Committee called upon ACC to monitor the implementation of the guidelines and requested the Administrator to report on the implementation of the decision.

13. During the period 1991-1992, UNDP had taken measures to ensure that the Special Programme Resources (SPR) made available through the Special Unit for TCDC provided catalytic complementary support on a much greater scale than before to UNDP-funded activities. Increased emphasis had been put on evaluation work in an effort to improve support services and TCDC had been given greater consideration in the preparation of programmes and implementation of projects through the active participation of the Special Unit in the Action Committee, Policy Team and individual projects and programmes. Many umbrella projects designed to support TCDC and its application had also been started by Governments drawing on indicative planning figure (IPF) resources or a mix of IPF and national resources. The SPR-financed programme approved for the fifth cycle also emphasized the focus on application and the use of TCDC through the introduction of two new subprogrammes.

14. Another major development with important implications was Economic and Social Council decision E/1992/41, which called on all parties to give first consideration to the use of TCDC. Consequently, the Administrator had informed the field offices of the importance of that decision and exhorted them and Governments to give priority to the application of that modality.

15. At its eighth session, in its relevant decision, the High-level Committee had also expressed concern at the level of resources made available through Special Programme Resources and had requested the Governing Council to consider maintaining programme resources at the approved level for the period 1992-1996.

16. Mr. CLAVIJO (Observer for Colombia) said that his delegation endorsed decisions 8/1 and 8/2 adopted by the High-level Committee at its eighth session (DP/1993/L.9, annex I). The adoption of a strategy to promote technical cooperation among developing countries as envisaged in decision 8/2 was vital; of equal importance was the High-level Committee's concern about the decrease in Special Programme Resources, which would make it very difficult to achieve the objectives of TCDC within the United Nations system.

17. His delegation was going to submit to the Drafting Group a procedural resolution calling upon the Governing Council to endorse those two decisions and requesting the Administrator to see to it that all means available were used to ensure the implementation of the decisions. He hoped that all delegations would support the resolution.

18. Mr. PHANIT (Observer for Thailand) said that in the new climate of international development cooperation the members of the international community had set a new development agenda in which peace, development and democracy were closely interlinked and equally important. They shared a new vision of sustainable human development in which people were both the end and the means of development. After almost half a century of multilateral development and

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cooperation, the world had returned to the original ideal of the Charter, which was "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". Thailand remained convinced of the importance of TCDC in the new world climate. TCDC was an indispensable instrument for enhancing national and collective self-reliance, broadening true global partnerships, and linking the South, North, West and East as equal development partners.

19. The development challenges in the decade ahead demanded that TCDC be approached from different perspectives in order to strengthen technical cooperation among countries of the South. TCDC was a multidimensional process which could take place at the bilateral, trilateral and multilateral levels. For its part, Thailand saw the future role of TCDC as part and parcel of subregional, regional and international cooperation aimed at achieving sustainable development. UNDP and its Special Unit for TCDC played a crucial role in maintaining the spirit of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

20. The relevance of UNDP in the contemporary multilateral assistance development system lay in its ability to grasp new responsibilities as they emerged, and a renewed commitment to TCDC must be part of those responsibilities. His delegation was pleased to see that UNDP had adopted a new focus in responding to the international development consensus in the areas of environment and development, the advancement of women and their role in development, regional economic integration, and the enhancement of the role of non-governmental and grass-roots organizations.

21. In the field of environment and development, he welcomed the progress and initiative of UNDP in coordinating the implementation of Agenda 21 with other organs of the United Nations system. Thailand fully supported the Capacity 21 initiative and the role of UNDP in managing the Global Environment Facility. TCDC, as a concept and modality, would be incorporated into the projects or programmes under those two funds.

22. In the field of women in development, he noted with satisfaction the new strategies and initiatives adopted by UNDP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to force the issue of women in development into the mainstream. His delegation shared the view that women's issues could not be separated from any development issue and that all issues were women's issues. It was therefore imperative that consideration of the role of women should be part of all TCDC activities.

23. With regard to regional cooperation, Thailand supported the role of UNDP, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in enhancing regional and subregional cooperation, particularly within the context of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and Indo-China. ESCAP, however, should be more committed to enhancing the TCDC modality in its development activities.

24. In addition to those areas, Thailand welcomed the role of UNDP in the new common ground for multilateral assistance and cooperation within the United Nations system and commended the Programme on its efforts to provide assistance

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in such areas as humanitarian affairs, nation-building, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. TCDC should also be part of that new focus.

25. Thailand had attained the target of an 8 per cent increase in voluntary contributions to UNDP. In recent years, it had forged an increasingly strong partnership with other countries of the region. Its international cooperation programme had provided bilateral technical cooperation to other developing countries in various fields ranging from agriculture and public health to management and administrative training. Thailand had also expanded TCDC trilateral cooperation with United Nations agencies in order to enhance technical cooperation with other developing countries. It saw that arrangement as a new alternative for integrating TCDC into the subregional technical cooperation scheme with its neighbouring countries in Indo-China. His Government would continue to explore new approaches aimed at expanding TCDC activities with other developing countries in the region.

26. The outcome of the eighth session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, held in May 1993, had strengthened Thailand's belief that the wide application of TCDC in the implementation of development programmes and projects was crucial to achieving the goal of an equal development partnership. In order to achieve the ideal of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, however, it was important to first strengthen national focal points and to develop clearer policies and commitments.

27. Referring to the report of the Administrator on TCDC (DP/1993/52), he welcomed the measures taken by UNDP to expand the use of TCDC in the programmes and projects which it funded. His delegation agreed in principle with the recommendations and draft guidelines prepared by the Fifth Agency TCDC Focal Point Meeting of United Nations organizations held in July 1992.

28. In a world of constant changes, TCDC could change its form and structure but never its goals and idealism. It was indeed the bridge that joined the peoples and countries of the South.

29. Mr. MORALES-CARBALLO (Cuba) said that he supported the proposal by the Colombian delegation that the Council endorse the decisions contained in annex I to document DP/1993/L.9.

30. Mrs. CORVALAN (Observer for Chile) reaffirmed the importance that her country attached to technical cooperation among developing countries as one of the innovative initiatives to be strengthened and taken into account in the allocation of IPFs in the sixth programming cycle, particularly for developing countries at the intermediate level of development that were being excluded from the programming cycle so as to enable them to enjoy comparative advantages.

31. Chile would like to strengthen its national capacities which would enable it to participate in TCDC. As a result of the experience gained it could contribute to the implementation of that system in the future. In that regard, she supported the Colombian delegation's proposal.

32. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) noted with satisfaction the progress made in the field of TCDC. He hoped that such efforts would continue in the future.

33. Mr. AMBATCHEW (Director, Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC)) noted with appreciation the expressions of support for the work carried out in the area of TCDC. Some of the suggestions put forward at the current meeting would be followed up in future activities.

34. The PRESIDENT, summarizing the general debate with particular reference to issues relating to the future role of UNDP, said that the high-level character of the debate was attested to by the presence among the speakers of one prime minister, one deputy chairman of a council of ministers, ministers, and a number of other high-level officials. Well-informed analysis and thought-provoking ideas and suggestions had characterized the debate, whose central theme had undoubtedly been the future role of UNDP.

35. Most delegations had spoken against the background of the recent significant decrease in the resources of UNDP. Some had attributed that situation to budgetary constraints in donor countries and to the rapidly increasing demands in the areas of emergency assistance and peace-keeping, while others had cautioned that the modest resource prospects should not lead the Council in the direction of a lessening of the role of UNDP. Concern had also been voiced that significant IPF reductions could undermine carefully designed priority development programmes.

36. All delegations had stressed the high value they attached to UNDP and the unique standing of the Programme in the international development system. At a time of growing awareness of the interlinkages between peace and development, and while the international community was confronted with challenges of staggering proportions in such vital areas as humanitarian assistance, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and sustainable development, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it was widely felt that a strong and effective UNDP could make a difference. The concept of sustainable human development and the active profile of UNDP in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly through the Capacity 21 project, had won general praise from speakers. In that connection, the distinctive comparative advantages of UNDP had been acknowledged as essential factors in the record of achievements of the Programme and as providing a sound basis for the future role of UNDP. The ideological and commercial neutrality of UNDP, its universality, multilateralism and the grant nature of the resources it allocated to developing countries had been noted in that regard.

37. Many delegations had also stressed the value which they attached to the world-wide field network of UNDP, to the multisectoral nature of its mandate and operations, and to its irreplaceable role as a repository of decades of development experience.

38. The development and refinement of new instruments, particularly the programme approach, national execution, and the new support cost arrangements had been welcomed as positive developments, although some delegations had referred to the need for further elaboration and clarification of guidelines.

(The President)

39. Similarly, the concept of the country strategy note as a useful tool for improving coordination of United Nations activities at the country level had been widely accepted, although a number of delegations had emphasized the role of recipient Governments as the driving force behind the elaboration of the strategy note and had stressed the need to ensure a truly country-based programming process.

40. Some delegations had identified the decentralization of authority from headquarters to the field level, country specificity, the adoption of flexible approaches by UNDP, and the strengthening of the role of the resident coordinator in promoting capacity-building in the recipient countries as areas in which further initiatives should be taken if UNDP wished to build on its comparative advantages and to sharpen its competitive edge in the evolving field of international development coordination.

41. Several speakers had endorsed the emphasis by UNDP on women in development and had called for continued use of cost-effective means of implementation, such as TCDC, the United Nations Volunteers programme and closer collaboration with non-governmental and grass-roots organizations. The need to increase the resources allocated to Africa in view of the acute economic problems of that continent had also received broad support.

42. Some delegations had expressed the view that the future role of UNDP should focus on a limited number of thematic areas, while others felt that future activities of the Programme should be directed almost exclusively towards the low-income countries. Yet other delegations had argued for a more systematic focus of the activities of UNDP in the areas of good governance, democracy and electoral assistance. Those new options and initiatives had not gained the full support of the Governing Council at the current stage.

43. The thematic approach had raised concerns about compatibility with the multisectoral character of UNDP on which the comparative advantages of the Programme were predicated. It further seemed to some delegations to be in conflict with the country specificity and flexibility which had also underpinned the major successes of UNDP to date. Moreover, the thematic approach had proved to be a cumulative process which had often resulted in spreading UNDP resources too thinly at the expense of the real needs and requirements of developing countries.

44. The concentration on low-income countries alone was seen by some delegations as jeopardizing the universal scope of the Programme and calling into question its world-wide network which had proved invaluable in numerous instances, particularly during emergency situations and humanitarian crises. It further endangered the profile UNDP had been struggling to maintain as a coordinating and central funding agency.

45. With regard to the role of UNDP in promoting good governance, democracy and electoral assistance, there had been some strong endorsements of that trend as well as equally strong objections. Some groups had claimed that the involvement of UNDP in those areas should be on an exceptional basis, given the existence of

other competent mechanisms and the need to focus UNDP resources on sustainable human development. Other delegations had strongly advocated the re-empowerment of UNDP as the central funding and coordinating body which it had originally been meant to be.

46. Reference had also been made to the ongoing process of restructuring and revitalization of the economic, social and related fields of the United Nations. Different views had been expressed on the issue of governance and on the question of financing mechanisms and modalities. The general view, however, was that a constructive outcome of the discussions would help the climate for more meaningful and responsible operational activities.

47. UNDP must never lose the support it received from the developing countries. That support stemmed from its multinational composition and global presence, and from the sense of ownership that came from full participation in governance.

48. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the President's summary of the general debate would be very useful to the Council in its deliberations on the future of UNDP. He therefore proposed that it should be included in the Council's final documentation.

49. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to adopt the proposal by the representative of Switzerland.

50. It was so decided.

LIST OF REPORTS REQUESTED IN DRAFT DECISIONS

51. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council) said that a preliminary list of reports requested in draft decisions at the current session had been circulated to the members of the Council in accordance with a procedure initiated two years earlier concerning rationalization of work. The list referred to reports that had already been requested in decisions adopted by the Drafting Group and the Standing Committee for Programme Matters. The Budgetary and Finance Committee had not yet concluded its work. On the whole, it was not felt that the reports requested would place an unmanageable burden on the secretariat or that there would be an unduly long list of documents for future sessions.

52. Mr. ZOLLER (United Kingdom) said that his delegation attached a great deal of importance to the list of reports requested in draft decisions and felt that the Council should postpone final consideration of the matter until the complete list was available. As his delegation had pointed out in the past, the Council should as much as possible consider the possibility of biennializing reports and avoiding duplication, which sometimes occurred. Efforts should continue to limit the number and length of reports and reduce the burden on the secretariat as much as possible.

53. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council) said that the secretariat had reduced the number of pages of documentation submitted to the Council and would continue its efforts in that regard in order to make a more manageable set of documents available.

54. The PRESIDENT said that the Council would return to the item when it received the complete list of reports requested in draft decisions at its next meeting.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL IN 1994

55. The PRESIDENT said that the Bureau had given consideration to the calendar of work for 1994 and the draft provisional agenda for the forty-first session of the Governing Council.

56. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council), introducing the item, said that the draft provisional agenda for the forty-first session of the Governing Council would be reviewed and adopted at the organizational meeting to be held in February 1994. The calendar of work for 1994 might be changed, subject to decisions by the General Assembly on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations. At the current time, the organizational meeting and special session of the Governing Council were scheduled to be held from 15 to 18 February 1994. The forty-first session of the Governing Council, which would include a high-level segment, would be held in Geneva from 6 to 24 June 1994. It was anticipated that the workload would not be as heavy at that session since there would be fewer country programmes to be considered by the Standing Committee for Programme Matters and since the Budgetary and Finance Committee would have a lighter agenda because 1994 was not a budget year. Accordingly, the Council should be able to conclude its work within that three-week period.

57. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the Council should take account of the fact that very little time had been allotted for consideration of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at the current session. The number of meetings devoted to the Fund at the forty-first session would be of particular importance in view of preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo in 1994.

58. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council) said that although the number of plenary meetings allotted for UNFPA had seemed insufficient to certain delegations, account had always been taken of the possibility of extending the discussion on the Fund in plenary meetings, if that had been felt necessary. In view of the upcoming Cairo Conference, the Council could give more time to the consideration of UNFPA at its forty-first session since, as he had already pointed out, the workload would be lighter then.

59. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council agreed, subject to decisions of the General Assembly on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, to the dates for its organizational meeting and special session and the forty-first session, as well as the draft provisional agenda for the forty-first session as outlined by the Secretary.

60. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.